Citation classics in social policy journals

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Abstract

This article is the first to explore the concept of 'Citation classics' in Social Policy by examining the articles published in five leading Social Policy journals that have fifty or more Web of Science (WoS) citations. It introduces the concept of citation analysis; discusses 'citation classics' in terms of definitions, measures, journals and databases; examines the literature on other social sciences, and particularly Social Work; and then focuses on the empirical material of citation classics in Social Policy journals. It finds 79 articles with fifty or more citations. Over half of the articles were written by authors based in the UK at the time of publication, with most of the others from the rest of Europe. About two thirds were classified as 'conceptual', and about a quarter were quantitative. Surprisingly few were qualitative or reviews. Roughly one third of articles were mainly focused on a particular service area, with the leading areas being employment, health, social care/ community care or long-term care. For the setting or focus of the study, nearly two thirds were comparative, while about a quarter were based on the UK. The leading topic was welfare regimes (14 articles). The limitations to this analysis include focusing on five social policy journals, and ignoring other outputs such as books; and the problem of determining what influence these articles have on the field of Social Policy. However, exploring the neglected area of citation classics in Social Policy provides one way of determining intellectual significance within the discipline.

Keywords:

Bibliometrics; citation analysis; citation classics; Social Policy

Introduction

It has been claimed that we live in an age of metrics (Baneyx 2008**),** while Wilsdon et al (2015) point to 'the metric tide'. Bibliometrics is a potentially valid, although imperfect, indicator of the impact of a scientist, organization, country, or journal (Holden et al 2005a, 2010; Martinez et al 2015b). It provides objective criteria to evaluate research developed by scientists, and do is increasingly valued as a tool for assessing scholarly quality and productivity (Martinez et al 2015b). Jacobs (2009) states that citation counts have become part of the landscape of academic journal publication.

However, it is controversial, with many different pros and cons (eg Bornmann and Daniel 2008**;** Holden et al 2005b; Leydesdorff 2008; Meho 2007; Wilsdon et al 2015) and tends to be used more in the USA and within science disciplines, with its value in social sciences less certain (Ouimet et al 2011**;** Archambault and Larivière 2010). Although it has been used in a number of social science fields, it does not appear to have been used in Social Policy (but see Powell 2006). Exploring citations in Social Policy is important for three main reasons. First, there has been less focus on citation analysis in social science as opposed to science disciplines. Second, it allows us a view of how Social Policy compares to other social science subject areas. Third, much of the focus of citation analysis has been in subject areas

dominated by USA journals (eg Phelan 2000). Writing on Social Work, Slater et al (2012) point to a 'great divide' between UK and USA journals. However, Social Policy tends to be regarded as a 'European' subject, with most of the leading journals based in the UK and Continental Europe.

This article is the first to explore the concept of 'Citation classics' in Social Policy by examining the articles published in five leading Social Policy journals that have fifty or more Web of Science (WoS) citations. First, it introduces the concept of citation analysis. It then discusses 'citation classics' in terms of definitions, measures, journals and databases. As there is no previous literature on Social Policy, it examines the literature on other social sciences, and particularly Social Work. It then focuses on the empirical material of citation classics in Social Policy journals, before turning to a conclusion.

Citation Analysis

Citation analysis is one technique within the wider field of bibliometrics or scientometrics. Citation analysis has a long history. Examples of citation indexing have been noted as far back as the 12th century (Wouters 2000; Holden et al 2005b). Early twentieth century studies include Cole and Eales' (1917) study of comparative anatomy (Narin 1975; Phelan 2000) and the pioneering paper of Gross and Gross (1927) which was the first to use citation counts to evaluate the importance of scientific work (Bornmann and Daniel 2008)**.** The subsequent period has seen the rise and rise of citation analysis (Wilsdon et al 2015). Buschman and Michalak (2013) claim that since the 1960s citation counts have been the standard for judging scholarly contributions and status, while according to Ajiferuke et al (2010)**,** citations have represented a fundamental unit of measure for assessing the influence of authors and their scholarly works for decades. Buschman and Michalak (2013) consider that **c**itation counts have long been the tried and true measure of academic research usage and impact, with published articles in prominent journals citing other published articles in other prominent journals equating to prestige and tenure.

Particularly for the USA (as suggested by the reference to federal agencies and the spelling of 'centers', below), citation analysis is an important tool to assess and analyze the academic research developed in countries, universities, research centers, research groups, and journals (Holden et al 2005a). According to Baneyx (2008), citation analysis now has important implications for grants, funding, and tenure decisions. Citation analysis has become a strategic type of information for individuals, laboratories, institutions, and even countries. Bornmann and Daniel (2008) state that citation analyses have been conducted for assessment of national science policies and disciplinary developments, departments and research laboratories, books and journals, and individual scientists. Academic institutions, federal agencies, publishers, editors, authors, and librarians increasingly rely on citation analysis, along with publications assessment and expert opinions, for making hiring, promotion, tenure, funding, and/or reviewer and journal evaluation and selection decisions. Many governments, funding agencies (in the US at least) and tenure and promotion committees use citation data to evaluate the quality of a researcher's work (Meho 2007).

Meho (2007) explains that citation analysis essentially involves counting the number of times a scientific paper or scientist is cited, and it works on the assumption that influential scientists and important works will be cited more frequently than others. He points to a **'**sobering fact that some 90% of papers that have been published in academic journals are never cited, and

as many as 50% of papers are never read by anyone other than their authors, referees and journal editors.' However, Remler (2014) points out that no evidence is produced for this assertion, and she found another studies that suggested that non-citation rates vary enormously by field, with 32% of social sciences articles uncited.

Citation analysis is controversial (Wilsdon et al 2015). For supporters, the basic argument is that citations are important. According to Meho (2007), citation analysis is based on the assumption that influential scientists and important works will be cited more frequently than others. Bornmann and Daniel (2008) point out that high quality work by a scientist will trigger more responses (citations) from scientific colleagues than low quality work. They state that a substantial body of literature has shown that the number of citations to scientists' publications are correlated with other assessments of scientists' impact or influence, such as awards, honours, and Nobel laureateships, departmental prestige, research grants, academic rank, and peer judgments.

However, critics point to problems such as 'cronyism' (friends or colleagues reciprocally cite each other to mutually build their citation counts); 'ceremonial citations' (where an author cites an authority in the field without ever having consulted the relevant work itself); negative citations (pointing out incorrect results); self citations **(**people deliberately citing themselves or journals they are involved with); time lag (with the 'half-life' of a paper varying between disciplines); incomplete usage (ie ignores other measures such as downloads, social media etc); incomplete influence; and "homographs" (failing to separate citations to two unrelated scientists who happen to share the same last name and first initial) (see Ajiferuke et al 2010; Buschman and Michalak 2013; Leydesdorff 2008; Meho 2007). Bornmann and Daniel (2008) claim that the probability of being cited depends on many factors that do not have to do with the accepted conventions of scholarly publishing: time-dependence, field-dependence; journal-dependence, article-dependence, author/ reader-dependence factors; and the problem of limited understanding of citing behaviour, as authors use citations with different intentions and meanings.

Citation classics

Bibliometric approaches may be focused on the performance analysis based on publication and/or citation analysis applied to journals, researchers, articles, or faculties (Holden et al 2005a; Martinez et al 2015b). One strand focuses on highly cited papers which are an important reference point in a research field, and the development of studies on citation classics or highly cited papers is becoming one of the most popular strategies to analyze scientific disciplines (Martinez et al 2015a). A 'citation classic' is a bibliometric concept introduced by Eugene Garfield (Garfield 1977) to designate those highly cited papers of a scientific discipline. Citation classics are regarded as the "gold bullion of science" which recognize the major advances in the discipline, identify emergent or hot topics, and identify the main intellectual markers of the research field, which could be journals or researchers or countries or research groups or institutions (Martınez et al 2014). Examining highly cited articles reveals important information about the relatively small number of papers that make a significant impact upon a given field (Hodge et al 2012). In any scholarly field, some works are widely acknowledged as classics, whereas the great majority are little noted nor long remembered. According to the 'Iron Law of Important Articles', the number of significant articles increases only to the extent of the square root of the number of published articles

(Holub et al 1991). It follows that as a research literature grows, important articles constitute an ever-decreasing proportion of the total output (Sigelman 2006). There have been studies of citation classics in many research fields (see eg Hodge et al 2012; Martinez et al 2014, 2015a). There are a wide range of approaches to selecting citation classics, with differences for definitions, the sample of journals, measures and databases.

Definitions

There are two approaches of selection criterion: setting the threshold values on the citations received (eg over 100 citations), or setting the threshold values on the number of highly cited papers to be retrieved (eg top 100 or 50 papers; or top 1%). Both approaches do not take into account the citation patterns and the scientific evolution of the research areas. it is unclear why use 100 or 50 or 25 and not 95 or 45 or 35, respectively, or why would we have to use the top 1 % and not the top 2 % or the top 0.5 %? Moreover, in a large research field such as physics a figure of 2000 may be appropriate, 100 may be suitable for areas such as social work (Martınez et al., 2014). Thresholds in different fields range from 615 to 41, and the number of citation classics vary from 10 to 1187 (Martinez et al 2014)

Journals

It is possible to explore all journals in a discipline or field, but it is not clear how the 'field' is defined, particularly in inter-disciplinary fields. One method is to draw on Thomson Reuters Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) Journal Citation Reports (JCR) fields (see below). This has been criticised due to ISI's limited coverage, especially in the Social Sciences and Humanities (eg Harzing and van der Wal 2008), and is particularly problematic in fields such as social policy which does not have a JCR field, but is spread over categories such as 'social issues', 'social work' and 'public administration'.

There have been many attempts to draw up a 'core journals' or a 'nucleus of periodicals' in fields (Strothmann 2010). She outlines 'Bradford's Law of Scattering' which states that 'the articles of interest to a specialist must occur not only in the periodicals specialising on his subject, but also, from time to time, in other periodicals, which grow in number as the relation of their fields to that of his subject lessens and the number of the articles on his subject in each periodical diminishes' (Bradford 1950: 110). The law predicts that 'a relatively small core of journals will account for as much as 90% of [a subject's] significant literature' (Garfield 1971: 222). For Strothmann (2010), the law justifies establishing a point of cessation for journal lists as sooner or later the point of diminishing returns is reached. She argues that most studies in social work have focused on small lists of very important journals. She focuses on 'the very top tier of constantly cited journals', and regards the journals in the first quartile of most frequently cited sources as Bradford's predicted nucleus.

There is a widespread impression that several JCR Social Work journals should not be considered true disciplinary journals because their mission and aims are not fully oriented to the Social Work discipline (Holden et al., 2005a; Hodge and Lacasse, 2011b; Lacasse et al., 2011; Thyer, 2005, 2010; Martinez et al 2014, 2015a). For example, Hodge et al (2012) provided a list of 80 disciplinary journals including 19 disciplinary journals that were indexed in the 2008 JCR Social Work category. Martinez et al (2015a) drew on 25 'true disciplinary' journals from the 2012 JCR Social Work category.

Measures

There are a number of possible measures to detect core journals: total citations; Impact Factor (IF); and H index (Wilsdon et al 2015). Total citations can be considered as reflecting the prestige of a journal, while impact factors highlight a journal's current value at one or more research fronts. The two measures are correlated (Leydesdorff 2008; Harzing and van der Wal 2008). However, IFs can vary significantly over time (see eg Leung and Cheung (2014) for social work journals), and since total citations accumulate, they are more stable (Leydesdorff 2008). The criteria of citations per year appears, surprisingly, to be used much less frequently.

The IF gives a more current measure, as it specifies a 'citation window'. The impact factor has several weaknesses. First, its scores can be significantly influenced by a few highly cited articles and/or too many uncited or low-cited articles. Second, authors and journals that frequently publish review articles tend to have their citation counts and impact exaggerated because these types of articles are usually highly cited. Third, citation counting and impact factors do not take into account articles that were used but did not get cited. Fourth, the IF is based on a small sample of journals indexed by Thomson ISI. Fifth, IF can vary significantly over short periods of time. Finally, the two-year 'citation window' in the standard IF fails to capture the 'long-term value' or the real impact of many journals (Harzing and van der Wal, 2008; Meho, 2007; Hodge and Lacasse 2011a**,** b).

While originally developed to assess scholarship at the individual level (Hirsch, 2005), the h-index has been used to evaluate journal quality in a number of fields. A h-index value of X is obtained if an entity has X publications that have all been cited at least X times. For example, a journal would have an h-index value of 20, if 20 of its articles had been cited at least 20 times each. It is claimed that the h-index is a measure of both quality (number of citations) and quantity (number of publications) (eg Hodge and Lacasse 2011a). Similarly, Baneyx (2008) argues that the advantage of the h-index is that it combines an assessment of both quantity and visibility (citations of these papers, or in other words, the impact on the community). Meho (2007) points out that a flurry of empirical studies shows that the h-index correlates positively with citation counts, impact factors, publication counts and peer evaluation of research impact and quality.

Hodge and Lacasse (2011a) point out that a journal's h-index value can be calculated with data from Thomson ISI, Elsevier's Scopus, or Google Scholar (see below). However, they suggest that GS h-index may be a better measure of journal quality than Thomson ISI IF for social work due to the flexible time frame (the h-index citation window can be adjusted to suit the research culture of a given discipline), the computational method that emphasizes quality and quantity, and the superior source coverage may yield more valid depictions of journal quality (see also Harzing and van der Wal, 2008). However, h-index values derived from Thomson ISI and GS are typically highly correlated, but the latter produces higher h-index values due to the wider coverage of academic source material. (eg Harzing and van der Wal, 2008; Hodge and Lacasse 2011a; Hodge et al 2012; Jacobs 2009)

However, Meho (2007) considers that, like all citation-based measures, the h-index must be used with caution as it is insensitive to highly cited works and disregards total citation counts. These problems have led to a wide variety of measures, such as the contemporary h-index, e-index, h-core, individual h-index, A-index, AR-index, g-index, h(2) index, h–b index, creativity index, Ca, and age-weighted citation rate (see eg Burrell 2007; Harzing and van der

Wal, 2008; Hodge and Lacasse 2011b ; Lacasse et al 2011; Leydesdorff 2008; Meho 2007). Bergstrom (2007) has developed the eigenfactor as a means to assess journal quality. In a similar fashion to Google's ranking Web sites, this approach employs a form of network analysis to identify the most influential journals. A journal's eigenfactor score is claimed to be the measure of the journal's total importance to the scientific community. However, it is influenced by journal size, and so a journal's Article Influence score is a measure of the average influence of each of its articles. Both are based on a five year citation window and are based on discipline fields that adjust for citation differences across disciplines. (http://www.eigenfactor.org/about.php). The eigenfactor Web site includes a category for social work, which listed 25 journals (Hodge and Lacasse 2011a). This has now expanded to 31, with 'Social Policy and Administration' ranked 11th, 'Journal of Social Policy' 12th, and 'International Journal of Social Welfare' 14th.

Finally, Buschman and Michalak (2013) argue that a better categorization of scholarly impact would cover usage, captures, mentions and social media (altmetrics) in addition to citations (see also Wilsdon et al 2015). Meho (2007) states that using a download rather than citation count means that the impact of an article or a journal can be measured in real time, rather than having to wait several years after it has been published. He writes that here is a strong, positive correlation between download counts and both citation counts and impact factors, although the degree of correlation varies from one research field to another.

Bollen et al (2009) performed a principal component analysis of the rankings produced by 39 existing and proposed measures of scholarly impact. They concluded that the notion of scientific impact is a multi-dimensional construct that cannot be adequately measured by any single indicator, but warned that the commonly used citation of IF is not positioned at the core of this construct, but at its periphery, and so should be used with caution.

Databases

According to Meho (2007), **t**he Web has given birth to more than 100 new databases or tools that allow citation searching. The best known are perhaps Web of Science (also referred to as Web of Knowledge; Social Science Citation Index; Thomson Reuters ISI), Scopus and Google Scholar. These databases do not cover the scientific fields and journals in the same way and have their respective advantages and limitations, which are somewhat discipline dependent (eg Falagas et al 2008; Harzing and van der Wal, 2008; Martinez et al 2015b; Wilsdon et al 2015).

The Thomson Reuters Web of Knowledge claims that it delivers 'FACT…..the largest and only true citation index', with 12,000 titles going back more than a century containing over 90 million records. It contains some 5300 social science publications in 55 disciplines (www.webofknowledge.com). While it is the oldest and traditionally most influential database, its coverage of journals in the social sciences is relatively limited (Baneyx 2008; Harzing and van der Wal, 2008; Jacobs 2009; Blyth et al 2010; Hodge and Lacasse 2011a)

Scopus (scopus.com), which was launched in 2004 by Elsevier, contains over 21,500 peer-reviewed journals, with more than 60 million records, with some 24% of titles (ie about 5160) in the social sciences.

Google Scholar (scholar.google.com), founded in 2004, is a free web-based database that allows searching "across many disciplines and sources: peer-reviewed papers, theses, books,

abstracts and articles, from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities and other scholarly organizations". While Google does not provide an 'official' size of its database, third-party researchers estimated it to contain roughly 160 million documents as of May 2014. Though Web of Science and Scopus both provide a clear list of indexed content, information is less clear for Google Scholar. In general, GS captures more citations but more noise (e.g., nonacademic citations), and does not perform as well for older publications (Hodge and Lacasse 2011a).

Across all journals studied by Levine-Clark and Gil (2009), the average number of citations in WoS was 7.95 (averaged just for those with an IF) compared with 9.27 in Scopus (a 16.68 per cent difference) and 15.78 in GS (a 98.63 per cent difference). There were 22.34 results on average in GS (181.12 per cent more than the number of citations in WoS). Since Scopus covers more than twice as many journals as WoS, it is not surprising that it identified more citations. The fact that it only identified 16.68 per cent more citations may show that the additional journals in Scopus are of marginal importance to these social science disciplines relative to those in WoS. The extra content – books, conference papers, pre-prints, etc. – indexed in GS may help to explain why this source had almost double the number of citations of WoS

Citation analysis in Social Work

Ouimet et al (2011) write that social sciences have not been the central target of bibliometricians, compared to the natural sciences or the health sciences, where the epistemological and methodological divide between positivism and constructivism is perhaps less prominent. According to Ajiferuke et al (2010)**, s**ocial sciences tend to have lowest citations per publication (25.1) and h index (17.9), compared to clinical medicine (102.3 and 72.9). Archambault and Larivière (2010) point to several limits to the use of bibliometric analysis of scholarly communication in the social sciences and humanities such as the lower proportion of social science and humanities journal articles; social sciences and humanities literature's ageing rate, and conversely its post-publication citation rate; and the local relevance of social sciences and humanities knowledge. They conclude that social sciences and humanities knowledge production can be observed using bibliometric methods only when the greatest care is taken.

There do not appear to be any studies in Social Policy (but see Powell 2006), but there are studies in Politics (Sigelman 2006), Geography (Wrigley and Matthews 1986) and Sociology (Jacobs 2005, 2009; Phelan 2000). For Geography, Wrigley and Matthews (1986) provide twenty of the most cited articles written by geographers (citations in SSCI and SCI until end of 1984; self-citations excluded). The top ranked article received 193 citations (or around 10 cites per year), while the 20th ranked received 52. Sigelman (2006) focuses on a single politics journal. He states that most of the articles that have appeared in 'The American Political Science Review' since its inception in 1906 have rarely if ever been cited. By the end of 2005, some 155 Review articles had been cited 100 or more times, with Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz's article 'Two Faces of Power' being cited more than 500 times. Citation patterns vary over time for leading articles. Jacobs (2005) focuses on the 'American Sociological Review', the 'flagship' journal in sociology, with 379 articles with over 100 citations, and nearly 20 surpassing the 500 mark. The highest cited article was Paul

DiMaggio and Walter Powell's 'The Iron Cage Revisited' with 1753 citations. Jacobs (2009) points out that two articles in 'Gender and Society' have achieved over 500 citations.

Turning to Social Work, Holden et al (2010) point to a relatively long history of reports examining the features and outcomes of scholarly publication in social work extending from the 1960s and 1970s to the current decade [20 citations; see also reviews by Holden et al 2005a, b), which include studies focusing on single journals; across journals; researchers; articles, or faculties. Focusing on citation classics in Social Work, Hodge et al (2012) examine the 100 most influential articles published during the period 2000-2009. They find that a substantial portion of these were conceptually or theoretically oriented (cf Jacobs (2009) for 'Gender and Society'). They continue that a number of literature reviews were also highly cited, which is consistent with findings in other disciplines. Only 12 articles (just over over 10 per cent) could be considered 'citation classics' on the benchmark commonly used to determine a citation classic of a minimum of 100 citations.

Ho (2014) analyses the characteristics of classic articles, defined as 50 citations, published in the WoS Social Work subject category from 1856 to 2011 derived from 73506 documents from 41 journals**.** He shows that 721 classics, published between 1957 and 2008, with the USA accounting for 89 % of classic articles

Martinez et al (2015a) identify 65 highly cited papers in Social Work by means of H-Classics from a smaller collection of 18794 documents (including only full papers and reviews) and a list of 25 journals. They argue that that Ho's (2014) figure of 721 is an 'exorbitant number' as Social Work has little tradition of publishing in journals, with fewer journals indexed in JCR that have low impact factors, especially, in comparison with some traditional science areas. In their view, Ho uses a threshold criterion that does not take into account the citation pattern and the evolution of the scientific production of the Social Work discipline. Their most cited paper has 263 cites (from 1957), with their 65th paper having 67 (with 4.7 and 3.7 cites/ year respectively). They note that the majority of highly cited articles (91%) concentrates in the top seven Social Work journals, while 77% of the highly cited papers belong to three of the oldest journals, which is in line with most of analysis of highly cited literature carried out.

However, all studies point to the dominance of USA journals (cf Phelan 2000 for Sociology). Slater et al (2012) extend the analysis of Hodge et al (2012), finding that the number of citations of their top 100 articles in the two-year period 2007– 09 was 3,978. They point to the tendency towards within-country citation in the USA and the UK—'what could be described as intellectual chauvinism', with some evidence of the 'Great Atlantic Divide' between these two countries. They conclude that it has long been common knowledge that, in the social work field, Americans and Brits do not tend to read each others' journals too much or go to each others' conferences. We now know they are reluctant to cite each others' papers. They also point to distinctive methodological traditions, with a far greater proportion of quantitative outcome-focused social work research in the USA than the UK.

Citation Classics in Social Policy journals

This study explores citation classics from the core social policy journals. As noted above, there is no JCR field for Social Policy, but the aggregate cited 'half-life' for journals in the Social Work category is 8.6 years. In other words, roughly 50% of all articles cited by

journals in the social work category were published prior to about 2005 (on 2014 JCR data) and 50% were published since then (see eg Hodge and Lacasse 2011a). The Social Policy journals explored below have a long half life ranging between 7.1 to 9.7 years, and so analysis focuses on all citations rather than those within a short two, five or ten year period. However, it presents citations per year in addition to total citations to allow for differing citation periods since publication.

There has been some reference to Social Policy journals within the wider disciplinary literature. For example, for Social Work Hodge and Lacasse (2011) mention the 'International Journal of Social Welfare' (7^{th} with a H index of 26; g = 33; IF = 0.631), while 'Journal of Social Policy' and 'Social Policy and Administration' are included in Ho (2014) with 13 and 5 respectively of 721 classic papers. Phelan (2000) examines the 207 journals classified as sociological by ISI, which include 'Journal of European Social Policy', 'Journal of Social Policy', and 'Social Policy and Administration', although they were not included in the 59 journals considered 'purely' sociological.

The problems of defining a discipline or field was discussed earlier. This is even more problematic for fields such as social policy which does not have a JCR field (but is spread over categories such as 'social issues', 'social work' and 'public administration') than Social Work which has a JCR field (see eg (Holden et al., 2005a; Hodge and Lacasse, 2011b; Lacasse et al., 2011; Martinez et al 2015a, b; Strothmann 2010; Thyer, 2005, 2010). The following five journals were selected. Different measures give slightly different rankings, but in general JSP ranks highest and IJSW lowest.

Journal	WoS IF	WoS 5 year IF	WoS Average citations per article	WoS Eigenfactor	WoS Article Influence Score	WoS H index	GS Average citations per article	GS H index
Critical Social Policy	1.139	1.530	6.29	0.00171	0.721	29	23.7	75
International Journal of Social Welfare	0.875	0.909	4.09	0.00152	0.411	22	14.7	53
Journal of European Social Policy	1.397	1.954	8.83	0.00264	1.086	38	32.5	88
Journal of Social Policy	0.865	1.236	2.84	0.00165	0.597	44	33.7	84
Social Policy and Administration	0.854	1.216	4.01	0.00188	0.568	33	26.2	72

The threshold was set at 50 WoS citations (cf Jacobs (2009) for 'Gender and Society'; Ho (2014) for Social Work). This gives a list of 79 articles (Appendix), which is between the numbers of 65 of Martinez et al (2014a) by means of H-Classics and the 100 most influential

articles in Social Work (Hodge et al 2012)**.** The most cited article was Macintrye et al's (1993) review of area and health with 523 ISI and 968 GS citations.

Of the 79 articles, 31 appeared in JSP, 24 in JESP, 14 in SP&A, 8 in CSP and 2 in IJSW. A number of scholars authored or co-authored two citation classic articles: Will Arts, Marian Barnes, Jonathan Bradshaw, John Clarke, John Gellissen, Steve Harrison, Julian Le Grand, Jane Lewis, Janet Newman, Gillian Pascall and Wim van Oorschot. 41 were written by authors based in the UK at the time of publication, with 29 from the rest of Europe, 6 from North America, and 3 from the rest of the world. In terms of the date of publication, the earliest article was published in 1980 and the latest in 2008, with 5 published in the period 1980-84; 4 during 1985-89; 2 during 1990-94; 18 during 1995-1999; 25 during 2000-2004; and 25 during 2005-2009.

The content of the articles largely follows the classification of Hodge et al (2012): quantitative; qualitative; mixed; conceptual; and review. In terms of the type of article, 50 were classified as 'conceptual', 19 were quantitative, 5 were qualitative, 4 were reviews and 1 was mixed (quantitative and qualitative). Only 24 articles were mainly focused on one particular service area, with 8 based on employment, 7 on health, 6 on social care/ community care or long-term care (with one article based on health and social care), two on cash transfers, with one each on housing and social work. There were no articles based on education. For the setting or focus of the study, 44 were comparative and 24 were based on the UK.

Of the 79 articles, the leading topics were welfare regimes (14); poverty (5, and 1 on deprivation and 1 on social exclusion); gender (5) (and linked issues, often written from gendered perspective, such as child care, family policy and parental leave); public opinion (3); citizenship (3); migration (3); workfare (2); health inequalities (2); social capital (2); and the voluntary sector (2).

Most of the articles with the highest number of total citations tend to have high citations per year, with Macintyre et al (1993) the highest with 523 ISI citations and 22.4 citations per year. Six of the top ten most highly cited articles having over 10 citations per year, but only three of the remaining 69 articles reach that threshold. This is fewer than the top four articles for Social Work of Ho (2014) with 26, 33, 21 and 16 citations/ year, but compares well with the leading Social Work articles of Martinez et al (2015a) whose most cited paper received 4.7 cites/ year and 65th paper having 3.7 cites/ year respectively.

The correlation between GS and ISI citations was 0.85. In general, GS had 3.19 times as many citations as ISI (cf other fields), but the ratio varied sharply between articles. The highest ratios are 5.83 (de la Porte et al 2001), 5.07 (Torfing 1999), 4.76 (Castles 2003). The lowest ratios are 1.71 (Burrows 1999), 1.78 (Wilkinson 1989) and 1.85 (Macintyre et al 1993).

Turning to the top ten articles, 5 were from the UK; 5 were conceptual; 2 were reviews; 3 were quantitative; and only two were based on sectoral areas (health and employment); 7 were comparative and 3 were based on the UK. The leading topic was, once again, welfare regimes with 3 articles.

Conclusions

This is the first article that explores the concept of ‘Citation classics’ in Social Policy. It examines 79 articles published in five leading Social Policy journals that have fifty or more ISI citations. Social Policy may be different to many other fields in that it does not exhibit the dominance of US authors and journals that characterise many other fields (see eg Slater et al, 2012; Phelan, 2000). Over half of the articles were written by authors based in the UK at the time of publication, with most of the others from the rest of Europe. There is a large time window from 1980 to 2008, although about two thirds of the articles were published in the period 2000-2008. About two thirds were classified as ‘conceptual’, and about a quarter were quantitative. Surprisingly few were qualitative or reviews. Roughly one third of articles were mainly focused on a particular service area, with the leading areas being employment, health, social care/ community care or long-term care. For the setting or focus of the study, nearly two thirds were comparative, while about a quarter were based on the UK. The leading topics was welfare regimes (14 articles). The correlation between GS and ISI citations was very high, but GS had 3.19 times as many citations as ISI, although the ratio varied sharply between articles. Turning to the top ten articles, 5 were from the UK; 5 were conceptual; 2 were reviews; 3 were quantitative; and only two were based on sectoral areas (health and employment); 7 were comparative and 3 were based on the UK. The leading topic was, once again, welfare regimes with 3 articles. The most cited papers appear to compare reasonably well with those in other social science areas such as Social Work in terms of total and citations per year.

Metrics and citation analysis will always be a controversial approach to examining ‘quality’ of academic publications (Wilsdon et al 2015). However, it can be argued that, at least with time lag or hindsight, it has a relationship with the ‘significance’ criteria of the UK Research Excellence framework (REF), where ‘world leading’ (4*) outputs are seen as changing the way we think about a subject, carrying the field forward, and containing research that is intellectually ambitious. It is difficult to see how an output can fulfil those criteria if it is not cited!

However, there are some problems in determining the extent to which these articles are ‘Social Policy citation classics’. First, this study examined the citations of articles in five social policy journals. It can be argued that this ignores other outputs such as books. For example, it could be said that the most cited output in social policy is ‘The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism’ (Esping-Andersen 1990) with some 21455 GS citations. Second, it is not clear what influence these articles have on the field of Social Policy. Although they appear in social policy journals, they are not necessarily written by social policy scholars or cited by social policy scholars. For example, the most cited article is by Macintyre et al (1993), who is not a social policy scholar and none of the first 100 citations is in a social policy journal. Conversely, articles published in other disciplinary journals may be of value to social policy. For example, an article by two social policy scholars Mary Daly and Jane Lewis (2000) with 767 GS citations appears in a sociology journal. Finally, an article by political scientist Paul Pierson (2000) in a political science journal with 5428 GS citations may be of value to social policy. However, in conclusion, exploring the neglected area of citation classics in Social Policy provides one way of determining intellectual significance within the discipline.

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Appendix: Citation classics

Author	ISI Cit	ISI Cit/ Yr	GS Cit	Country	Method	Service	Topic	Focus
Macintyre et al 1993, JSP, 22(2): 213-234	523	22.4	968	UK	Review	Health	Area and health	UK
Townsend 1987, JSP, 16(2): 125-146	365	12.7	872	UK	Conceptual		Deprivation	*UK*
Arts and Gelissen 2002, JESP, 12(2): 137-158	265	18.6	1192	Netherlands	Review		Regimes	Comparative
Gornick et al 1997, JESP, 7(1): 45-70	185	9.6	653	USA	Quantitative	Employment	Gender	Comparative
Bonoli 2000, JSP, 26(3): 351-372	164	8.6	705	Switzerland	Quantitative		Regimes	Comparative
Clarke 2004, JSP, 33(1): 27-48	134	11.0	407	UK	Conceptual		Public realm	*Comparative*
Le Grand 1997, JSP, 26(2): 149-169	122	6.3	363	UK	Conceptual		Motivation	*Comparative*
Clarke 2005, CSP, 25(4): 447-463	146	13.0	325	UK	Conceptual		Citizenship	*UK*
Scruggs	130	12.4	348	USA	Quantit		Regimes	Compar

and Allan 2006, JESP, 16(1): 55-72					ative			ative
Ringen 1988, JSP, 17(3): 351-365	122	4.3	492	Norway	Conceptual		Poverty	*Comparative*
Lister 2003, SP&A, 37(3): 427-443	118	8.7	310	UK	Conceptual		Citizenship	*UK*
Burchardt et al 1999, SP&A, 33(3): 227-244	115	6.5	516	UK	Quantitative		Social Exclusion	UK
Beland 2005, SP&A, 39(1): 1-18	111	9.9	423	Canada	Conceptual		Ideas	*Comparative*
Bettio et al 2006, JESP, 16(3): 271-285	106	10.4	396	Italy	Quantitative	Social Care	Regimes	Comparative
Van Oorschot and Arts 2005, JESP, 15(1): 5-26	103	9.0	340	Netherlands	Quantitative		Social capital	Comparative
Albertini et al 2007, JESP, 17(4): 319-334	102	11.5	299	Spain	Quantitative		Generational contract	Comparative
Harrison and Mort 1998, SP&A, 32(1): 60-70	102	5.5	244	UK	Conceptual	Health	Public and user involvement	*UK*
Van	96	9.4	330	Netherl	Quantit		Public	Compar

Oorschot 2006, JESP, 16(1): 23-42				ands	ative		opinion	ative
Cheong et al 2007, CSP, 27(1): 24-49	93	10.0	265	USA	Review		Social capital	*Comparative*
Esping-Andersen 1997, JESP, 7(3): 179-189	91	4.8	268	Italy	Conceptual		Regimes	Japan
Blomqvist 2004, SP&A, 38(2): 139-155	91	7.2	320	Sweden	Conceptual		Privatization	Sweden
Gelissen 2000, IJSW, 9(4): 285-300	90	5.4	212	Netherlands	Conceptual		Public opinion	Comparative
Molyneaux 2006, SP&A, 40(4): 425-449	90	9.2	341	UK	Conceptual	Cash transfers	Anti-poverty programme	Mexico
Gillies 2005, CSP, 25(1): 70-90	86	7.5	197	UK	Conceptual		Family policy	UK
Wheelock and Jones 2002, JSP, 31(3): 441-463	84	5.7	194	UK	Mixed		Child care	UK
Castles 2003, JESP, 13(3): 207-229	83	6.4	395	UK	Quantitative		Family policy	Comparative
Harrison 2002, JSP, 31(3): 465-485	81	5.7	156	UK	Conceptual	Health	Medical labour process	UK

Jessop 1999, SP&A, 33(4): 348-359	81	4.7	368	UK	Conceptual		Governance	*Comparative*
Finch And Groves 1980, JSP, 9: 487-511	79	2.4	244	UK	Conceptual	Community care	Gender	UK
Deacon 2000, JESP, 10(2): 146-161	78	4.6	358	UK	Conceptual		Eastern Europe	*Comparative*
Pfau-Effinger 2005, JSP, 34: 3-20	78	6.7	296	Germany	Conceptual		Culture	*Comparative*
Pavolini and Ranci 2008, JESP, 18(3): 246-259	77	9.2	214	Italy	Conceptual	Long-term care	Privatization	Comparative
Newman et al 2004, JSP, 33(2): 203-223	76	6.2	272	UK	Qualitative		Collaborative governance	UK
Starke 2006, SP&A, 40(1): 104-120	76	7.6	248	Germany	Review		Retrenchment	Comparative
Stern 1983, JSP, 12(1): 27-49	73	2.2	114	UK	Conceptual	Health	Health inequalities	*UK*
Visser 2002, JESP, 12(1): 23-42	72	4.9	253	Netherlands	Conceptual	Employment	Part-time employment	*Netherlands*
Abrahamson 1999, SP&A, 33(4):	70	4.0	301	Denmark	Conceptual		Regimes	*Comparative*

394-415								
Hoggett 2001, JSP, 30(1): 37-56	70	4.6	173	UK	Conceptual		Agency	*Comparative*
Torfing 1999, JESP, 9(1): 5-28	70	4.0	355	Denmark	Conceptual	Employment	Workfare	*Denmark*
Bradshaw And Finch 2003, JSP, 32 (4): 513-25	68	5.4	229	UK	Quantitative		Poverty	UK
Pahl 1980, JSP, 9: 313-335	68	1.9	228	UK	Qualitative		Money management	UK
Trifeletti 1999, JESP, 9(1): 49-64	68	4.1	316	Italy	Conceptual		Regimes	*Comparative*
Wilkinson 1989, JSP, 18(3): 307-335	68	2.4	121	UK	Quantitative	Health	Health inequalities	UK
Callan et al 1993, JSP, 22: 141-172	66	2.8	274	Ireland	Quantitative		Poverty	Ireland
Jacobsson 2004, JESP, 14(4): 355-370	66	5.3	270	Sweden	Conceptual	Employment	Soft regulation	*Comparative*
Lewis et al 2008, JESP, 18(1): 21-37	66	8.0	200	UK	Quantitative	Employment	Employment and Child care	Comparative
Pascall and Manning 2000, JESP, 10(3): 240-266	66	4.0	209	UK	Conceptual		Regimes and gender	Comparative
Bruning and	63	3.6	241	Netherlands	Conceptual	Employment	Parental leave	*Comparative*

Plantenga 1999, JESP, 9(3): 195-209								
Pascall and Lewis 2004, JESP, 33: 373-394	63	5.0	243	UK	Conceptual		Regimes and gender	*Comparative*
Higgs et al 2003, SP&A, 37(3): 239-252	62	4.7	136	UK	Quantitative		Quality of life	UK
Daly 2002, JSP, 31: 251-270	60	4.1	230	UK	Conceptual		Care	*Comparative*
Newman and Vidler 2006, JSP, 35: 193-209	60	5.6	123	UK	Qualitative	Health	Consumerism	UK
Aassve et al 2002, JESP, 12(4): 259-275	60	4.3	204	UK	Quantitative		Leaving home	Comparative
Barnes 1999, SP&A, 33(1); 73-90	59	3.4	181	UK	Qualitative	Community care	Users	UK
de la Porte et al 2001, JESP, 11(4): 291-307	59	3.7	344	Belgium	Conceptual		Social Benchmarking	Comparative
Forrest and Murie 1983, JSP, 12: 453-468	58	1.7	114	UK	Conceptual	Housing	Residualization	*UK*
Twigg 1989, JSP, 18: 53-66	58	2.2	163	UK	Conceptual	Social care	Carers	*Comparative*
Wong et al 2007,	58	6.2	192	Hong Kong	Conceptual		Rural migrant	China

IJSW, 16(1): 32-40							workers	
Bambra 2006, JSP, 34: 195-213	57	4.8	159	UK	Quantitative		Regimes	Comparative
Bugra and Keyder 2006, JESP, 16(3): 211-228	57	5.4	138	Turkey	Conceptual		Regimes	Turkey
Svallfors 2004, SP&A, 38(2): 119-138	57	4.6	186	Sweden	Quantitative		Public opinion	Comparative
Bode 2006, JESP, 16(4): 346-359	56	5.6	161	Germany	Conceptual		Voluntary sector and Welfare mix	Comparative
Gough et al 1996, JESP, 7(1): 17-43	56	2.8	230	UK	Quantitative	Cash transfers	Social assistance	Comparative
Sainsbury 2006, JESP, 16(3): 229-244	56	5.4	191	Sweden	Conceptual		Welfare regimes and migration	*Comparative*
Kasza 2002, JSP, 31: 271-287	56	3.7	231	USA	Conceptual		Regimes	*Comparative*
Walker 1980, JSP, 9(1): 49-75	56	1.6	249	UK	Conceptual		Poverty in old age	*Comparative*
Alexander 2004, CSP, 24(4): 526-549	54	4.4	136	UK	Conceptual		Community cohesion	*UK*
Ferge 1997, SP&A, 31(1): 20-	54	2.8	200	Hungary	Conceptual		Changed welfare paradigm	*Comparative*

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Cowden and Singh 2007, CSP, 27(1): 5-23	53	5.7	132	UK	Conceptual	Health and Social care	User involvement	*UK*
Cox 1998, JSP, 27(1): 1-16	53	2.8	223	USA	Conceptual		Citizenship and Welfare reform	*Comparative*
Garrett 2006, CSP, 25(4): 529-553	53	4.6	142	Ireland	Conceptual	Social work	Electronic turn	*UK*
Kwon 1997, JSP, 26: 467-484	53	2.8	205	Korea	Conceptual		Regimes	*Comparative*
Burrows 1999, JSP, 28(1): 27-52	51	2.8	87	UK	Quantitative	Housing	Residential mobility	UK
Deacon and Mann 1999, JSP, 28: 413-435	51	2.8	150	UK	Conceptual		Agency	*Comparative*
Dingeldey 2001, JSP, 30: 653-672	51	3.4	186	Germany	Conceptual	Employment	Tax systems	*Comparative*
Duncan 2007, CSP, 27(3): 307-334	51	6.0	148	UK	Conceptual		Teenage parents	*UK*
Roggeband and Verloo 2007, SP&A, 41(3): 271-288	51	5.5	131	Netherlands	Conceptual		Gender and migration	*Netherlands*
Billis and Glennerster 1998,	50	2.7	206	UK	Conceptual		Voluntary sector	*Comparative*

JSP, 27(1): 79-98								
McDonald and Marston 2005, CSP, 25(3): 374-401	50	4.2	144	Australia	Qualitative	Employment	Workfare	Australia